

C O P Y

15 December 1947

Senator Harry Flood Byrd, Chairman  
Joint Committee on Reduction of  
Nonessential Federal Expenditures  
217-D Senate Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Senator Byrd:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of 11 December relative to the submission of the strength figures of this Agency to the Joint Committee on Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures.

I have discussed this matter with the National Security Council, which has supervision over this Agency by recent Act of Congress, and have been instructed by the Council that, for essential security reasons, the strength of the Central Intelligence Agency should not be furnished for publication.

The publication of our strength would make this data easily accessible to enemy agents in this country. Such information would enable such agents to determine with relative ease the general program and strength of effort of the intelligence activities of the United States. I am sure you will agree that such a contingency would be highly undesirable, to say the least.

It has been our long-standing policy that no strength figures will be given out by this Agency for record purposes except to two specially cleared senior officials in the Bureau of the Budget who are charged with the handling of our budget problems. The Bureau of the Budget has consistently maintained the security of our strength figures under all circumstances. We have also several times in the past arranged with committees of Congress to withdraw requests for our strength figures for record purposes after discussing with them our essential security requirements. Also, by long-standing verbal agreement, we have furnished no strength or individual personnel data to the Civil Service Commission in order to insure that such data would not be recorded.

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It was suggested to the representative of your Committee who recently contacted us that the published strength report of Government agencies exclude our figures, such exclusion to be explained by a footnote to the effect that national defense reasons make this necessary.

I have no desire to withhold these figures from you personally, and will be pleased to see you at your convenience and to inform you verbally of our actual and contemplated strength for your information only, and, of course, not for publication.

I am sure you will understand my own and the National Security Council's great concern about the full security of the activities and operations of this Agency. I wish also to assure you of my full cooperation with the needs and desires of your Committee to the utmost extent commensurate with our national defense and security.

The above considerations do not apply to the personnel figures of the National Security Council, however, and these will be forwarded to you on a monthly basis, as you have requested.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ ROSCOE H. HILLENCOTER  
Director of Central Intelligence Agency

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